

Miami University's national conference to offer a close look at civil rights struggle

Miami University's upcoming national conference on Freedom Summer will feature some leading voices revisiting that pivotal time in civil rights history and discussing the struggle that continues today.

The "50 Years After Freedom Summer: Understanding the Past, Building the Future" reunion and conference Oct. 11-14 will include historic participants along with scholars, activists, students and others exploring the continued significance of Freedom Summer.

Bob Moses, leader of the Mississippi Summer Project, and David Goodman, brother of slain civil rights activist Andrew Goodman, will participate at the conference.

Other keynote speeches will be presented by acclaimed author and journalist Wil Haygood (Miami '76), about his research on former Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall; Chude Allen, focusing on her time as a

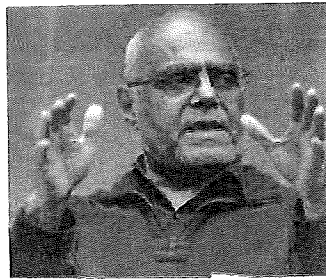
1964 Freedom Summer volunteer; and filmmaker Keith Beauchamp, about his work focused on racial hate crimes.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Mississippi Summer Project, which later became known as Freedom Summer. An estimated 800 volunteers — many of them college students — trained in Oxford before heading South to register black voters and set up Freedom Schools and community centers in Mississippi and elsewhere. The training took place at the Western College for Women, which is now part of Miami's Western campus.

Goodman, 20, Michael Schwerner, 24, and James Chaney, 21, were murdered in Mississippi soon after leaving Oxford. Public outrage over what happened to the three activists galvanized the nation and helped pass the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The conference will open with

a panel of leading civil rights workers and contemporary activists discussing the role of the civil rights movement in the past and present.



Bob Moses, a leader of the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project (photo courtesy Community Change Inc.)